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## IS VEDANTA PESSIMISTIC?

*A lecture delivered by the Swāmi Abhedānanda on Wednesday, November 16th 1898,  
in the Assembly Hall, New York.*

**G**REAT thinkers of all ages and of all climes have devoted their special attention and have spent their valuable time in trying to find out the solution of the great problem of our life, which is most intimately connected with the experience which we gather by coming in contact with the surrounding environments of our every day life; a problem in which almost every individual is more or less *deeply* interested: I mean the solution of the question—why is there so much suffering, and such an immeasurable amount of misery in this world of ours? And where is the remedy? Why is it that hundreds of people are dying of starvation or some kind of disease, after going through the trial of life-long struggles and continuous suffering? Why is it that we see millions and millions of people are working hard day after day, month after month, year after year, with the expectation of getting something which they will not obtain perhaps in their life-time? Labour, trouble, anxiety, worry, work, disappointment, misfortune and affliction form the lot of the majority of people of every

country and every age. Very few indeed find a path overflowing with milk and honey; and why is it so?

Various attempts have been made from the very ancient times to explain the cause of all ~~the~~ misery and misfortune of the world and to find a way out of it. All those explanations, which came from time to time, can be classified under two principal heads—optimistic and pessimistic.

Those who look at this world from the optimistic standpoint say that the pleasures, enjoyments and happiness outweigh pain, suffering, and misfortune which are nothing but the negative side of all that makes one happy. They do not think of the present states of things as they are, they do not face the facts as they stand now, but they try to hide the dark sides of things, with certain hopes or with some such ideas as all these sufferings and misery of the world are for our good. They say that we must think of those things not as miseries or sufferings, but as means for our good. If any blow come on our head we must not say it is a blow but we should think it is a flower. When a

man is suffering extremely, he must not say that he is suffering but he ought to delude himself by thinking that it is for his good. Perhaps he will find that good—not during his life-time but hereafter—when he is in the grave. Such optimists do not like to talk of the sufferings of people. They get frightened when they see or hear of such things, and hide their faces against such events. But hiding the face is not the proper way of finding remedy for a disease.

There are other optimists again who hold that there cannot be any evil in the creation of a just and all-merciful God. It is all good. All pain and misery come by accident. This is another way of shutting our eyes against the true nature of the facts around us.

There is still another class of optimists who believe that there are two spirits who are the creators of good and evil. Each of them is constantly trying to conquer the other. Although at present the evil spirit is gaining ground, but in the end he will be totally defeated by the good spirit. Then there will be no misery, sorrow or suffering in the world. This idea seems to be comforting to many.

Thus we see that the optimists are one-sided. They deny the existence of evil and see good in everything. But the pessimistic thinkers go to the other extreme. They come forward with the sledge-hammer of reason to demolish to the very foundation the fabric so carefully built by the optimists. They do not want to hide anything. They do not want to delude themselves by false hopes when they see misery, suffering and pain in every thing. They do not believe

that these happen by accident, but they hold that the very nature of our existence necessitates suffering, pain, and sorrow. We can never get rid of them as long as we live on this earth. Evil is a positive reality, while good is only a negation of evil. Evil predominates in this world. According to them all desires for pleasures end in suffering. Suffering and misery are the very texture of our life and pleasures come accidentally. If all our wishes be fulfilled the moment after they arise, how shall we spend our time? How shall we occupy our lives? There would be no struggle for existence, consequently no activity, no life. As the human frame will burst into pieces if the weight of the atmospheric pressure (which we are unconsciously carrying all the time) be removed, so according to the pessimistic theory the lives of men will burst, if they were relieved from the burden of need, misfortune, misery, hardship and adversity. There is no hope of avoiding this except by death. They do not believe in the idea that the creator who is all good, just and merciful could create this world of misery and suffering and then think that it was very good. So according to this class of pessimists life is not worth living. The best way to avoid misery and suffering is by committing suicide.

But there is another class of pessimists who hold that although our life is full of misery and suffering, yet our aim should be to make ourselves free from them. The foremost of this class of thinkers in India was Kapila the founder of the Sankhya school of philosophy. He flourished at least about the 7th century



before Christ. He said the highest aim of human life was to be entirely free from pain, misery and suffering both mental and physical. Kapila's ideas were afterwards taken up and promulgated by the great founder of Buddhism. Kapila did not believe in any extra-cosmic creator of the world; so Buddha too denied such a creator. The whole aim of Buddha's teachings was to find the way out of this world of sorrow, misery, disease and death. He said like Kapila that all sufferings, sorrow and misery proceed from *vāsand*, i. e. the extreme longing for life which is innate in us. This instinctive impulse is the essential cause of all animal life. And as every desire is a want, so it is a state of discontent, dissatisfaction and imperfection, and therefore it necessarily implies a state of suffering. A kind of restlessness or anxiety underlies even the purest form of human satisfaction, because in every enjoyment or pleasure there is an undercurrent of silent longing for the continuation of that state or a kind of fear of losing it. Our desires are insatiable. Every satisfaction we attain, lays the seed of some new desire, and that new desire when satisfied produces another, and so it goes on multiplying and multiplying; consequently there cannot be any end to such desires or longings. If we examine our own minds we shall find that it is quite true. According to Buddhism the only way out of the prison of this miserable worldly life is to turn away altogether from the pleasures of life by renouncing the world and its connections and by practising asceticism and self-mortifications in order to conquer that innate longing or desire

for life, and then to enter at last into the state of *Nirvāṇa*, where there is no desire for life, consequently no misery, no sorrow, no pain, disease nor death. This was the primary object of the teachings of Buddha. Thus we can understand how the pessimistic ideas gradually developed into a system of religion which is followed by nearly one third of the population of the whole world.

Those who mistake Buddhism for Vedanta, think, that Vedanta teaches the same thing which Buddha taught, and consequently find fault with it, by calling it pessimistic. Such people do not understand the fundamental principles of Vedanta which differ entirely from those of Buddhism. It is true that Buddhism is pessimistic; but Vedanta is neither pessimistic nor optimistic. It does not teach that the whole world is evil or bad, nor does it believe in the superficial optimism that every thing is good. It takes things as they are; it boldly faces the truth, finds out the cause of the disease and then brings the proper remedy. It does not teach that dismal system, that dreary gospel of disappointment, despair and misery as some people think. It does not tell us to leave the world and go to the jungle and practise asceticism or self-mortification; it does not make our life more burdensome by putting in our head that heart-rending and despairing idea *that life is not worth living*; it does not teach us to abandon our works and abstain from doing the duties of our life. But on the other hand it teaches us to live in the world, to perform all the duties by which we are bound at the different stages of our life, and at the same time

to overcome misery, pain and sorrow with which each individual life is beset. The aim of the Vedanta is to make our life smooth and happy, to make us bathe in the ocean of eternal bliss which lies within the soul of every individual. According to the teachings of Vedanta all the phenomeral appearances of the universe are like the waves of that infinite ocean of eternal happiness, which is pure and absolute; and the crest and hollow of each wave are what we call ups and downs or happiness and misery of our life. As there cannot be a crest without a hollow so there cannot be happiness without misery or a pain without a pleasure. In one of the Upanishads we read :—

*A nandādhyéva khalvimáni bhutáni  
jáyantè, ánandèna játáni jivanti ;  
Anandam prayantyavisamvisanti.  
Anando Brahmèti vyajánat.*

*Tait. Upa. III. vi. 40.*

From that infinite ocean of eternal happiness or Bliss all these creatures are born; when born they live through that Bliss and when they depart they enter into that ocean of Bliss. That ocean of Bliss ought to be realised, for it is the reality of the universe, it is the source of all happiness.

Such a wonderfully comforting and heart-consoling expression comes like a drop of *nectar* on the pessimistic heart which is burnt by the fire of misery, despair and disappointment. Did you ever hear any such expression from one who is a pessimist? (It is for this reason the pessimistic mind of the great German philosopher after reading Vedanta said,—“It has been the solace of my life

and it will be the solace of my death”).

The very first verse of the first book of Vedanta that was ever written teaches this grand truth—

*Ishávasyam idam sarvam yatkincha  
jagatyám jagat.  
Tena tyaktena bhunjitha má gridhah  
kasya svidhanam.*

*Isha. Upa. I. 1.*

Every thing of the universe must be covered by the Lord himself; and then giving up the attachment to transitory things live and enjoy your life, but do not covet anything of the world.

*(To be Continued)*

I, Buddh, who wept with all my brother's tears,  
Whose heart was broken by a whole world's woe,  
Laugh and am glad, for there is Liberty !  
Ho ! ye who suffer ! know  
Ye suffer from yourselves. None else compels,  
None other holds you that ye live and die,  
And whirl upon the wheel, and hug and kiss  
Its spokes of agony,  
Its tire of tears, its nave of nothingness.  
Behold, I show you Truth ! Lower than hell,  
Higher than heaven, outside the utmost stars,  
Farther than Brahm doth dwell,  
Before beginning, and without an end,  
As space eternal and as surety sure,  
Is fixed a Power divine which moves to good,  
Only its laws endure.

\* \* \* \*

It knows not wrath nor pardon ; utter-true  
Its measures mete, its faultless balance weighs ;  
Times are as nought, to-morrow it will judge,  
Or after many days.

\* \* \* \*

Such is the Law which moves to righteousness,  
Which none at last can turn aside or stay ;  
The heart of it is Love, the end of it  
Is Peace and Consummation sweet ! Obey !

—*The Light of Asia.*



## WHAT IS THE NEW PANTHEISM

(*Concluded from page 90*)

If I am not mistaken in my understanding of the implications of the latest trend of scientific thought, this conception is in entire harmony with and must logically follow the present outlook. Let me quote a few lines from Prof. Dolbear's latest utterance, namely, "Mathematicians, physicists and chemists are all adjusting their thoughts and interpretations of phenomena to the vortex ring of matter. The idea is that the atom is a vortex ring of ether in the ether, and its properties as an atom are due to the character of the motion which is embodied in it, in addition to the inherent qualities of the ether itself, out of which they are made."

So that, from this point of view, we may now say that all physical phenomena may be traced back to the varied motions of the atoms: but for the source of psychical phenomena we must look to the substance of the atoms,—the ether. Thus, at last, there comes to view a rational conception why it is that physical and psychical phenomena run back on parallel lines to the atoms; why it is that these two phenomena may be considered as two aspects of the one substance. But when we go back a step further and see how the atom is constituted, what it is, then we catch a glimpse of the source of the one, eternal energy, from which spring the two phenomena.

"Assuming this," continues Prof. Dolbear, "it seems that what science has so far been chiefly concerned with is the function of the atoms as exhibited by the particular form of motion it has, and no attention has been given to its function as due to the substance, ether, which is its body."

From this view, as you will have noted, we catch a glimpse of a function heretofore overlooked,—that function due to the qualities and character of its own substance,—a substance that cannot be defined in terms of matter, and leads straight to the conclusion that beneath the function of motion are other inherent properties, "out of which could emerge, under proper circumstances, other phenomena, such as life, or mind, or whatever may be in the substratum." This is a new and profoundly significant conception of science. Can it be wondered at before such a conception finite man should stand with hushed voice and reverently bowed head? We are so familiar with the terms, "life and mind," they impress us less, when used in this connection; but those other words, "or whatsoever may be in the substratum!" We possess already "life and mind," in some degree, transmitted to us from the infinite parent source; but we pause in humble wonder and awe, when we dare allow ourselves to contemplate the possibilities and potentialities which lie in that divine "substratum," from which we come, and of which we inherit, actually *inherit*. Truly, we are begotten, not made; we then possess in reality organic relations with this infinite substratum, and "it doth not yet appear what we shall be." Prof. Dolbear goes on to show that "Consciously directed superphysical energy must be assumed to give a rational account of the apparition of the first atom."

To the older view, then, which ascribed to matter the single function of molecular energy or motion, and all that it implies, we must now add the exhibition of "choice" and of "con-

sciously directed energy, unlimited in space, in time, in quality, for the universe is unlimited in all these." What are these but attributes of personality?

Here, then, we find scientific basis which affords scientific confirmation to the speculations of our modern biologists and naturalists who, by the observation alone were driven to the conclusion that every atom possessed psychical as well as physical qualities and attributes. And this view is confirmed, according to Prof. Dolbear, "by being in consonance with all the sciences, geometry, astronomy, geology and zoology—all grounded in experience, but experience that is uniform and compatible with all other experiences." "Such knowledge as this," he continues, "is knowledge which all mankind is bound to accept and adopt as soon as it is understood. There can be no quibbling about it, and history must everywhere be interpreted in accordance with the fundamental principles.—There is no one of the great religions of the world but will be profoundly modified just as fast as its adherents become acquainted with molecular science. In it there is no mysticism or jugglery, but through all things and over all things there is existence and power and potencies which are slowly but certainly working out through matter in all its forms, the development of consciousness through experience."

Are we not here afforded a glimpse of how it may be that consciousness is thus worked out through experience? Is it not because the relations that exist between matter, in all its forms, and the infinite substratum are organic relations? Are we not, in the deepest and most real sense, children, not things artificially created? Again I repeat, and with new emphasis, what was stated in my paper of last year: "We are spirit because He is Spirit; we live because He lives; there is only one mind, and we share it; only one spirit, and we are spirit; we inherit into His love, His wis-

dom, His eternity." We are, indeed, still an unfinished part of an unfinished process, but we are predetermined, by our inheritance to an ultimate harmony and oneness with "whatever may be in the substratum." Monistic idealism, or the conception of the immanency of God, finds, in this view, wonderful illumination and emphasis; and if we may consider the ether as the body of Deity, co-equal with space, pervading and also embosoming all bodies everywhere, what conceivable place is there where God is not? To this extent, then, "God is all, and all is God."

From such an altitude of scientific thought as this we may catch the real, tangible significance of these lines from an address of Prof. Schmidt of Cornell University a few days ago: "He is the energy, the soul, the life of this boundless and eternal universe. And yet He is near each soul, for in Him we live. He changeth not. There are no exceptions to His laws. In any mansion of His house we shall find His justice and His love to be the same. This gives more rest to the soul than any myth that hath passed away from our world of thought and fact." And another expresses a like idea in a more poetic, but not less true form: "The secret of moral happiness is with him to whom the sunshine is a caress, the twilight a benediction, high mountains a feeling, and the ocean, a presence." I said some moments ago that it is not to be wondered at that poetry, should be the first to recognize and express the "breath and finer spirit of all knowledge." Intuition is that masterful quality of the human soul which enables it to penetrate to the core of things and movements in advance of plodding reason. I also suggested that the present movement in the world of thought points to a coalescence or union of the essentials of the two great divisions in the world of philosophies and religions. In a late number of the Boston Transcript there appeared a translation of a poem sung by an intuitive, pantheistic



Hindu of many thousands of years ago. A few verses, characteristic of all of them, are as follow :—

And God is within and around me,  
 All good is forever mine ;  
 To all who seek it is given,  
 And it comes by a law divine.  
 Oh ! I stand in the Great Forever,  
 All things to me are divine ;  
 I eat of the heavenly manna,  
 I drink of the heavenly wine.  
 Who is this "I" that is speaking,—  
 This being so wondrous in might ?  
 'Tis part of the primitive Essence,  
 A spark of the Infinite Light.  
 Blasphemous and vain they may call me ;  
 What matters it all to me ?  
 Side by side we are marching onward,  
 And in time we shall all agree.  
 Ye pilgrims of varied probations,  
 Ye teachers of men ;  
 To your heaven-born revelations  
 My spirit shall answer, Amen."

To this voice of the Hindu seer there was echoed back across the centuries, a few months since, from this Western world of science, another voice, less flowing and liquid in form, perhaps, but largely expressive of the thought of these closing hours of the 19th century ; and in it may be discerned tokens that the "time when we shall all agree" may not be very far away :—

A fire-mist and a planet,  
 A crystal and a cell,  
 A jelly-fish and a saurian,  
 And caves where cave men dwell ;  
 Then a sense of law and beauty,  
 And a face turned from the clod,—  
 Some call it Evolution,  
 And others call it God.  
 A haze on the far horizon,  
 The infinite, tender sky,

The ripe, rich tint of the cornfields,  
 And the wild geese sailing high,  
 And all over upland and lowland  
 The charm of the golden rod,  
 Some of us call it Autumn,  
 And others call it God.  
 Like tides on a crescent sea-beach  
 When the moon is new and thin,  
 Into our hearts high yearnings  
 Come welling and surging in,—  
 Come from the mystic ocean,  
 Whose rim no foot has trod,—  
 Some of us call it longing,  
 And others call it God.  
 A picket frozen on duty,  
 A mother starved for her brood,  
 Socrates drinking the hemlock,  
 And Jesus on the rood ;  
 And millions who, humble and nameless,  
 The straight, hard pathway trod.—  
 Some call it Consecration,  
 And others call it God."

DR. C. T. STOCKWELL.

Man is not content within narrow limitations. The earth cannot contain him. He defies the confines of the body. He breaks his prison bars. He aspires. He soars. He is conscious of that which is not fed by bread alone. He must have soul-food ; else he shrivels and decays. He seeks within himself that which is higher than himself. Anon he learns that higher self is still himself. Seeking this, he seeks the divine. Here he holds communion—here he prays. He who knows himself, ever dwells in aspirations—his prayer is ceaseless. As the flower drinks the sunlight—his being absorbs the light divine. Here he aspires toward purity, love, gentleness, kindness, peace, truth, and goodness. He dwells on these powers. He holds their image in his mind. He sees. His mind is clothed anew. *He is transformed.* Such is true prayer. So let us ever pray. Amen.  
 —Rev. Henry Frank.

## KALI AND HER WORSHIP

## II

**T**HE infinite and absolute superconsciousness of which mind and matter are the *illusory* aspects, is, as is well-known, called Brahman in the Vedanta, and the energy which expresses itself as mind and matter is called Mâyà. This is no place to enter into an examination of it, but it is necessary to state here the theory of Mâyà. The infinite and absolute cannot by definition be limited and related, be differentiated and split up into parts. If a thing looks like that which it cannot be, if a rope is seen like a snake, we call it an optical illusion. In place of the secondless Brahman we find this infinitely variegated interplay of mind and matter. If Brahman is not to die, the universe of phenomena must be regarded as a show, as an illusion or Maya.

The ancient Rishis sought to symbolise this Mâyà-idea, express it in concrete form, by the image of Kali.

It is beyond our purpose to enter here into the question of the so-called idolatry of the Hindus. It will suffice for our present purpose to say, that in addition to word-pictures, which all worshippers use, the Hindu Rishis thought it wise to have concrete material images to help the understanding, and hence is the system of image-worship among them.

Let us now try to read the image of Kali.

The most prominent feature about her is her horridness. She is naked and dances on the bosom of her husband.

She has a garland of decapitated heads round her neck and her tongue is outstretched to drink the warm blood of her victims. Weapons and terrible agents of Death adorn and surround her. She is dark like an ominous rain-cloud and her dishevelled flowing masses of hair fall down to her feet. Her laugh beats the thunder-clap all hollow. She is all terror.

Is that the picture of a young Hindu woman?—She that has no individual existence apart from her husband, she that is so graceful, unobtrusive, retiring, always covered from head to foot, always the gentle, the soft, the loving mother! If anything, Kali is the exact reverse of the Hindu woman.

And that was exactly what the Rishis wanted to draw her and we must say their success was perfect. Nothing could be more unwomanly—more unlike a Hindu woman, than the picture of Kali they painted.

Mâyà has no individual existence apart from Brahman, like the snake apart from the rope, or the bubble apart from the water. So the Hindu woman who is but a type of the Original Woman has no individual existence apart from her husband. But what does Mâyà *show*? Instead of keeping in the back ground always, instead of playing her true rôle, she has grabbed Brahman, put him out of sight and shows *herself* in innumerable, terrible, unwomanly, unmotherly ways.



In place of the one limitless, taintless surging ocean of bliss, we have this infinitely variegated relative world of phenomena, and the one cry of misery and death, the inevitable product of the struggle for existence which dominates and shapes it, ringing through every plane of existence from the nebulous to the human. Unless we are prepared to blind and cheat ourselves deliberately we can no longer ignore *the one law* of life and progress which runs through all states of matter and mind. This is *struggle for existence*. And not one feature of Kali will be found overdrawn or exaggerated if she is looked upon as the concretised image of this fundamental law of relative life.

The first impulse which is apt to rise in the mind after this explanation of Kali is known, is,—If Kali is such, why worship her? She should be the last thing to adore!

A little reflection will show that this impulse is a reflex action of the ignorance of the true meaning of worship. Worship, as we Hindus understand it, is *constant remembrance*, always keeping before the mind's eye. And what is there, what can be there in the universe more important and vital for *Moksha* than to constantly live in the idea that the universe of phenomena which frightens us with its innumerable terrific faces is in reality but a *show*, a false appearance, the one truth being Satchidānanda which is back of it all?

Māyā is false, Kali is its symbol. If Kali were painted as the ideal Hindu woman, she would have been real. To convey her unreality—as she shows herself, she is painted as the ideal *non-woman*.

She hides Shiva under her feet, she

dances over his bosom and successfully draws and rivets all attention to herself, as the mirage which shines over the desert cheats, and holds back the vision of the onlooker from the true state of affairs.

She has to be seen through, she has to be crossed over. What else should be thought of or worshipped—if not she? Does one pore over a blank sheet, if one has to commit to memory a book?

Thus the true worshipper who knows her, who has seen through her, coolly ignores her existence, refuses to see her as she shows herself and succeeds to see her as she *is*. Her real existence is in Brahman, as the identity of a dream-ego is the ego which sleeps. The dream, however real and potent it may be for the time being, is nothing to the waking-consciousness. The seer tells Kali, that she is not what she seems, she is really Brahman and in no other light would he see her. She is Tarā (the way to Moksha) and Brahmamayī (pervaded, interpenetrated, overlapped and full of Brahman).

No other child of hers has expressed and interpreted her better and more fully than the divine Ramaprasad. His songs stand unequalled for force, simplicity and depth of expression of the divine Motherhood. We have only room here for the translation of a few of them dealing with the point under consideration.

“Who knows what Kali is? The six *darshanas* (systems of philosophy) have not obtained Her *darshana* (sight). Kali as a Swan, plays with the Swan in the lotus forest. The Yogi always meditates on her in the Mulādhāra (the plexus underneath the spinal chord) and in the Sahasrāra (that in the brain). Kali is the Atma (self) of the Atmarama (enjoyer

in the self); innumerable are the wonderful evidences and administrations of her. Tàrà resides in all forms, just as she pleases. The universe is the Mother's womb—you know what size it is. The Mahàkal understands her properly, who else knows her like Him? The world laughs at Prasada's words,—“Crossing the ocean by swimming!” My mind has grasped it—but not the prana. This dwarf wants to touch the Moon!”

“My mind, don't be intolerant. I have looked and searched through the Veda Agama and Purana; Kali, Krishna, Shiva, Rama—my Elokeshi (she with the dishevelled hair) is all these. She holds the horn as Shiva and plays on the flute as Krishna. O Mother! You have a bow as Rama and a sword as Kali. Prasada says the attempt to demonstrate Brahman is like the smile of the person who has got big rows of teeth always projecting out! My Brahmanayi is in all forms and at her feet are the Ganges, Gaya and Kashi.”

“Would, O Tara! such a day come, when streams will flow down my eyes with my repeating Tàra Tara?—The lotus inside the breast will blossom and raise up its head and the darkness of the mind shall vanish, and I shall fall down on the earth, and be beside myself with the name of Tara. Then shall I be able to give up all the questions of distinction and non-distinction (or duality and non-duality), all wants of the mind will vanish—O! the Veda is true a hundred times. My Tàra is formless! With the greatest happiness Ramprasada proclaims to the world that the Mother resides in all forms—Look O blind eyes! at the Mother, she is the dispeller of darkness!”

We are aware of the many beastly and corrupt rites which have come to be associated with Kali-worship. While our regret for them is boundless, we do not see the wisdom of inveighing against Kali-worship in the wholesale manner as is often done by some sisters and brothers. Destroy the weeds, but save the garden!

## SANYASA

### THE SECRET OF TRUE WORK

**T**HE real nature of every individual is one without a second, beyond all form and name and is spirit free and absolute in its essence. Somehow he has joined himself with the bondage of time, place and causation of this relative world and is not thus conscious of his essential freedom, which none the less, remains always intact. In spite of the individual being unconscious of his natural freedom, it ever asserts itself

behind this bondage and tries to press to the front. In fact, what an individual is, is the outcome of this freedom demanding its full assertion and wittingly or unwittingly he shapes himself in a fashion most conducive to this assertion.

The modern evolutionist formulates that from the universal tendency to self-preservation and self-aggrandizement, every living being attempts to adapt itself to its surround-



ing conditions, either by adjusting its form to that mode of development to which those conditions, such as they are, may be most favourable, or by assuming such other form, as can fight with those conditions to subdue and make them amicable by victory or to evade and leave them behind, to land the being on a safer and more friendly environment. Any way, struggle for self is regarded as the primary cause that determines the individual's form.

Religion recognizes the data of the evolutionist, but, instead of building on them a theory, as the evolutionist does, which leaves spirit out of consideration and attaches all importance to matter, it declares that the true secret of evolution is the demand for full manifestation of that innate freedom, which is already in every being. This freedom, it says, is struggling to express itself and, when forms are not adequately wide to admit of its full expression in them, they bar such expression for some time at least, but are compelled, at last, to give way before its stronger impellent. In the animal individual, the man was suppressed. But as soon as the animal form broke and gave place to the finer form, to wit, man, for which the suppressed man was waiting, out rushed man; so again,\* in man, there is waiting the potential spirit and when the ordinary human form breaks and gives place to the next finest, suited for such manifestation, the spirit becomes fully manifest. The animal becomes the man, because man-form is more expedient for the manifestation of the spirit within; and it is bound to become so, as this infinite tide of spirituality *must* express itself. This tendency of expression of the spirit is the first cause that determines the individual's form. The competition for life and self-gratification which the evolutionist postulates, are only momentary and unimportant effects, caused by rather inseparable

accidents.

Man instinctively pays homage to this internal spiritual authority and obeys its commands, though he may be often unaware of their exact meaning and therefore adopt a wrong method for the carrying out of its behests. With Hegel, he may conclude that the spirit is to be manifested in matter, that this world of name and form is superior to the non-world, where the spirit, bereft of all dualities, reigns supreme and so the more an individual is concerned with the workings of the life of this material world, the better he is. Or, with Christ and Buddha, he may try to understand that every attempt is vain of the spirit to be manifested in matter, that this world is a degradation, that the more he plunges into the affairs of this world, his spiritual nature becomes the more concretised and materialised till it is thereby almost destroyed and reduced into mere matter. He may thus turn his face away from matter and beat a retreat to his original perfection, by giving up this imperfection,—this world of sense and vanity. His little "me" with its little world, will have to go back and join the infinite, its own nature. This is renunciation and the very beginning of religion.

"Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh and the lust of the eyes and the vainglory of life is not of the Father, but is of the world." (I. John 11, 15)  
 "Know that the life of this world is but a game and pastime and show and boast among you; and multiplying riches and children is like rain, whose vegetation delighteth the infidels—then they wither away, and thou seest them all yellow and they become chaff." (Koran. Chap. LVII).

Few, very few are the blessed souls that can grasp an ideal and follow it and regulate

their life, accordingly, for the sake of the ideal only. To abide by an ideal, others generally require to have associated with it the actual possession or future hope of something tangible, which appeals agreeably to their senses; amelioration of a present disliked condition recommends the ideal to many. Early propagation of Christianity was due more to the expectation of the kingdom of heaven on earth under the benign reign of "the Son of man in the glory of his Father with his angels," than to a true appreciation of the prophet's ideal, that "the kingdom of God is within you." Buddhism found its footing in India more because it laid open the gates of religion to one and all, without distinction of creed or caste, thus delivering the then suffering society from the shackles of Brahmanical supremacy, than that its legions of votaries even apprehended the great Nirvána doctrine preached by the Kapilá-vastu sage.

Regain the original freedom,—is the religious ideal. To be convinced of the foremost necessity of realizing this ideal, the generality of mankind want, for sometime, an experience of this world of husbands and wives and friends and little loves, to be taught their nothingness, want to taste some exceptionally bitter fruits of this world, before they can look up to find such realization. They that can struggle after religion by only perceiving in thought the momentariness of sorrows and joys of this present life, without having had to pass through a lamentable experience of them, are those who follow the ideal for the sake of the ideal only. As such they turn out the leaders of our societies. They are the hinges on which religious movements of every age have turned.

*(To be continued).*

M.

## SOME NEEDS OF HINDUISM

**ONE** great sign of the times is the genuine interest which is growing in and outside India concerning Hinduism. Open almost any book we may, we find allusion to Indian ideas. Unknown friends stand up for it. Within India itself, there is a better knowledge about it than at any previous period in recent history. The national self-abasement which became painfully manifest during the commencement of English education in India is gradually dying out and a healthy patriotism and love for our own country and religion is growing, whose activity if only directed to proper channels will be most beneficial to the whole nation

as well as to the world at large. The Revival of Hinduism is a positive fact and the enthusiasm it has created is enormous. I propose in this short paper to point out certain courses of religious activity, which will convert this enthusiasm into a great conserving principle fruitful at all times and supply certain very serious needs in the present condition of our religion.

2. A prominent feature of this Revival is its academic character. It is mostly confined to lecture rooms and religious journals and consequently influence only a fringe of the educated minority. The great mass of the people ignorant of English has been left out of its



ennobling influence. Cannot some means be adopted which will make this Revival bear upon the practical life of the people and tend for their social and religious amelioration? Great as is the sublimity and ethical nature of Hinduism, its influence on the minds and morals of the mass of the people falls considerably short of the degree we should expect. Even many of the popular works of Hinduism are sealed books to the mass of the people. There are few to expound the religion. The old institutions such as chanting the Ramayana, etc., which to some extent supplied this defect are fast dropping one by one. There is an amount of barbarism and brutality among the lower classes which is a disgrace to our religion. There are tribes and castes whose criminal proclivities have been allowed free play for several centuries unchecked by the refining influence of religion. The little that is done is due to individual initiative and consequently spasmodic and ineffectual.

3. While we are thus showing a culpable indifference to the spiritual welfare of the people at large, India has become the scene of warring religions and Hinduism has to confront two of the most formidable and aggressive religions of the world. Islam what with its unsurpassed capacity for proselytisation and the enormous power it had for hundreds of years in wielding the destinies of India, has succeeded in appropriating one-third of the Hindu population to itself. Even now when it is shorn of all political power, it is, by the peculiar fascination which it possesses for the lower classes making progress, though secretly. Christianity now in the zenith of its power politically and numerically is even more formidable. The strength it derives from its ubiquitous organization, its political advantages and most of all from its vast financial resources and the enterprising character of its large

number of workers, is marvellous and it bids fair to undermine the foundations of Hinduism unless the latter takes, betimes, the necessary defensive measures. Missionary schools and colleges are dotted over the land. Hindu youths at their most impressionable period of life come in contact with missionary teachers with the result that young men who have been induced to leave their parental roofs and all the steadying influence of home have become painfully numerous. Vigorous pamphletting agencies are at work and Christian tracts full of the worst of religious venom flood the land. The people of the lower classes such as the Pariahs who form the back-bone of the Indian Society, are becoming in large numbers converts to Christianity. Not only no steps are being taken for keeping these people within the fold of our religion, but every facility is given for their secession to the ranks of other religions. The exclusive and patrician tendencies of the higher castes so alienated the people in the past that the lower cases were driven in large numbers to seek Mohammedanism, as the only way of raising their position in Indian Society. While going out of Hinduism, owing to the existence of the system of outcasting, is the easiest thing in the world, the coming back to it, is most difficult, nay almost impossible; and the Amrita Bazar Patrika, the most conservative journal in India in social matters had to denounce the policy as suicidal. Do the Hindus consider these facts? No they do not, they delude themselves into the belief that all the religions of the world will adopt their principles of toleration, forgetting that semitic religions will require centuries of culture and enlightenment to cast off from them the spirit of intolerance and that the vigorous propagandism of a religion like Christianity is not the outcome solely of the spirit of altruism, but also of shrewd calculations of political

and economical advantages. Of course no body need fear that Hinduism will become extinct at any time in the land of its birth. But conversions from Hinduism to other religions will grow on apace, till a time will be reached, when the Hindus will be considerably less numerous and weak as a body and utterly unfit to cope with the powerful Mohammedan and Christian communities in the keen struggle for existence. This forecast is not wild fancy taking its rise from the depths of pessimism, but is based upon facts. In the centenary celebration of the Christian Missions, lately held in England, Lord Northbrook gave the following account in describing the progress of the Protestant Missions in India. "Between 1851 and 1890 the native Indian clergy had increased from 20 to 800, native lay agents from 500 to 3500, Christian congregations from 250 to 5000, and individual Christians from 70000 to 670000." He again said, "though the increase in actual converts might be slow, yet Christian feeling was pervading the Hindu population and Christian books of devotion were habitually used among them." The figures quoted above apply only to Protestant Missions. If to these be added the progress of the Roman Catholic Missions which are reported to be decidedly more skilled in the work of conversion and if we take into consideration the success that must have been achieved by all the Missions during the decade that will be completed in 5 or 6 months more, we may well be staggered. On the whole it will not be surprising if the coming census contain certain painful disclosures, regarding the progress of Christianity in India and the continuous drain from the ranks of Hindu-

ism. If Hindus be in the future as they were in the past, their degradation is a foregone conclusion.

4. The great problem before us is not to increase the ranks of the Hindus, but to preserve the present numerical strength unimpaired and to make conversion to other religions as little as possible and to convince those aggressive religions which are too sanguine of undermining ours of the impracticability of their fond notions.

*(To be continued)*

R. ARAMUTHOO IYENGAR

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Did you ever hear of a country, where the greatest kings tried to trace their descent, not to kings, not to old barons and robbers living in old castles, and coming down on poor travellers, but to semi-naked sages in the forests? Did you ever hear of such a land? This is the land. In other countries great priests try to trace their descent to some king, here the greatest kings would trace their descent to some ancient priest. Therefore, whether you believe in spirituality or not, for the sake of the national life, you have to get a hold on that spirituality and keep to it. Then stretch the other hand out and get all you can from other races, but everything must be subordinated to the one ideal of life and out of that a wonderful, glorious, future India will come—I am sure it is coming—greater than India ever was. Sages will spring up greater than all the ancient sages, and your ancestors will not only be satisfied, but I am sure, they will be proud, from their positions in other worlds, to look down upon their descendants, so glorious, and so great. Let us all work hard, my brethren, this is no time to sleep. On our work depends the coming of the India of the future. She is there ready waiting. She was only sleeping. Up and awake her, and let her be seated on her eternal throne, rejuvenated, more glorious than she ever was—this motherland of ours. And may He who is the Siva of the Saivas, the Vishnu of the Vaisnavas, the Karma of the Karmis, the Buddha of the Buddhists, the Jina of the Jains, the Jehovah of the Christians and the Jews, the Allah of the Mahomedans, the Lord of every sect, the Brahman of the Vedântists, He, the all-pervading, whose glory has been known wholly in this land—may He bless us, help us, give strength and energy unto us, to carry this idea into practice.

—Swami Vivekananda.



## NĀNĀ KATHĀ

FOLLOWING each other in quick succession, two well-known Hindu Saints, both having large followings, shuffled off their mortal coils during the last May and June. The Swami Vishuddhananda Saraswati of Benares passed away early in May in his own place at Benares and Goswami Vijoy Krishna of Calcutta breathed his last in the first week of June at Puri, Orissa, where he had gone on pilgrimage. The former was better known, perhaps, as a *Savant* who had few equals in the department of Sanskrit philosophy and the latter, probably as a *Bhakta*, a god-drunk man of a very high order. The former attained the ripe old age of ninety, while the latter was only fiftyeight.

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IN *Sunday Magazine* for December there is the following summary of the work of Mr. George Müller, of Bristol :—

Mr. George Müller, the founder of the Ashley Down Orphan Homes, delivered at a meeting of the Young Men's Christian Association a wonderful testimony of answer to prayer. He is now in his ninety-third year, and says that whenever he has felt he might ask a blessing of God he invariably went on praying till he got the answer. Every stone of the Homes was the result of prayer; every particle of timber was the result of prayer; for he had never asked a single human being in the wide world for a penny of the £115,000 which the buildings alone cost. Year after year now for sixty-two years he had been going on in that way, without asking for

a shilling. In this way he had obtained more than £1,400,000. God had enabled him to found schools in different parts of the world in which he had had 122,000 scholars. From amongst these God had given him 20,000 souls. Poor man as he was, he had been able, in answer to prayer, to send £257,000 to the missionary brethren. They might see from such figures how much could be accomplished through prayer. He took up his orphan work especially with the object of giving a visible demonstration to the whole world and the Church of God of what prayer could do.

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A WRITER in Italia Termale, quoted by The National Druggist, (American) December, is not much in favor of the theory that late suppers are injurious. "He declares, in fact," says the latter paper, "that many persons who remain thin and weakly, in spite of all precautions in regard to diet, etc., owe the fact largely to habitual abstemiousness at night. He says, very truly, that physiology teaches us that, in sleeping as in waking, there is a perpetual waste going on in the tissues of the body, and it seems but logical that nourishment should be continuous as well. The digestion of the food taken on at dinner time, or in the early evening, is finished, as a usual thing, before or by bedtime, yet the activity of the processes of assimilation, etc., continues for hours afterward; and when one

retires with an empty stomach, the result of this activity is sleeplessness and an undue wasting of the system. 'All other creatures,' says the writer, 'outside of man are governed by a natural instinct which leads those having a stomach to eat before lying down for the night.' The infant, guided by the same instinct, 'takes the breast' frequently, in the night as well as day, and if its stomach is allowed to remain empty too long, it shows its discomfort by noisy crying. The digestive organs have no need for repose, provided, always, that the quantity of nourishment taken within the twenty-four hours does not go beyond the normal limit. The fact that the intervals between meals is short, works no inconvenience, but, on the contrary, tends to the avoidance of feebleness, which is the natural result of an interval extended to too great a length. Feeble persons, lean and emaciated people, and, above all, those suffering from insomnia, owe it to themselves not to retire without taking some nourishment into the stomach—bread and butter, a glass of rich milk, a few biscuits ('crackers'), for instance. We quite agree with the writer in all that he says in regard to the folly of the idea of the harmfulness of a light lunch before retiring."

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THE following bit of extract from the Rev. W. P. Reeve's *Pierre Jay Prize Essay* on the subject of the difficulties which Mohammedanism presents to Christian proselytisation, is a genuine chip of the old block of Christian bigotry:—"In current legend the historical Mohammad has been idealised into a being endowed with supernatural attributes. This mythical Prophet has been formed on the model of Jesus Christ. The doctrine of Pre-existence takes the form of the theory of the 'Light of Mohammed' which was with God before Creation. Like the birth of Christ, his birth was announced from above. He was subjected to a satanic temptation. He was able to solve enigmas put to trouble him. Unclean spirits

obeyed him and he had the power of performing miracles. His death was accompanied by portents, and he rose again from the dead. Of the difficulty which springs from this tendency, Dr. S. W. Koelle, long a missionary to Islam, remarks: 'It is mainly this unnaturally magnified, this unhistorical and fictitious Mohammed, who sways the hearts of the Moslems and keeps them from recognising in Jesus Christ the true Saviour of man'.

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We notice the above, because it forms part of a *prize essay*,—not the wild ravings of the ordinary wayside missionary who generally bears such a strong resemblance to the proverbial frog in the well. The opponents for whose destruction ways and means are studied in the above paper, acknowledge Jesus Christ and several other characters of the Biblical legend as true Prophets, thus proving their deeper spiritual insight as well as broader charitableness of heart. The hold which the spirit of commerce has taken on the mind of the Christian nations is evidenced by the manner in which it has leavened the whole domain of their thought is marvellous. "No other wares combine in them the cardinal virtues of excellence and cheapness than are made or sold by us," say the merchants. "There may be others in the market but they are not so good as ours, or are, at best but poor imitations of our own goods." The Christian missionary only applies the same principle which is the dominant characteristic of the European people, when he says the Gods and and prophets of other nations are false or at best but poor imitations of their own.

But it is surely time they should understand that however advantageous, principles of commerce might be for acquiring worldly power and wealth, they act like poison when applied for gaining things of the kingdom of God.

Or perhaps the time is not yet ripe. For the Christian scheme though older than the Mohammedan is still quite young. And this getting over selfishness in things spiritual is a hard feat to accomplish—the result of struggle for ages. And Christianity as we have already said is still quite young.